

THE  
VVAY TO  
A BLESSED  
ESTATE IN  
THIS LIFE.

DRAVNE  
Out of a Treatise  
of Faith ; Contai-  
ning Legacies to  
*Gods Children,*  
shortly to be  
published

By  
EZEKEL CULVERVELL.

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THE  
VVAY TO  
A BLESSED  
ESTATE IN  
THIS LIFE.



THAT which our  
LORD IESVS  
from Heauen  
writ vnto the  
Church of *Sardis*; *Thou hast*  
*a name that thou liuest, but art*  
*dead,* may be truely spoken  
of the greater sort of not-  
counterfeit professors of the  
faith in our times: for it is

A 3 cleare

Rev. 3. 1.



Many drow  
sie profes-  
sors.

cleare by the Text, that this is not spoken of hypocrites, who are starke dead, but of such who hauing some life remaining in them, are in a dead sleepe: for these of whom I speake, take good paines to keepe vp a name of Christianitie, both in the exercises of Religion, and in their outward behaviour, (though in both there be much fayling,) but in very truth there is but a little life offaith and loue in all their profession, as may appeare in their cold and vncomfortable prayers, in their wandring and drowfie hearing of the Word, and vnfruitfull receiuing of the Sacraments, and much more in their abuse and neglect of the se-

cret



cret exercises of prayer, reading, and meditation by themselves, and conference with others, seldome deeply bewayling their estate, lesse reioycing in the assurance of their salvation by *Christ*, as seldome delighting in God, with a zeale to set forth his glory in euery part of their life.

Though this be the state of the greater part of those that haue some truth of grace in them, yet may we say againe, that there are with vs, (as in the Church of *Sardis*) *a few names that haue not defiled their garments*, that is, doe liue vnrebukably, and walke worthie their holy calling, having a sweet feeling of Gods favour  
vnto

A few  
worthy.

vnto them, and so can boldly come vnto him in time of need, with assurance that he doth graciously respect them, their prayers and vnfeigned obedience; who likewise doe more delight themselves in God, then in all earthly things, accounting it their greatest griefe to offend him, and greatest ioy to please him; possessing their soules with confidence and patience in their greatest trialls, looking for the appearing of *Christ*.

What a  
blessed life  
here may  
be attained.

This is that blessed estate to be inioyed in this life, which God hath prepared, (though in diuers measures) for the faithfull, all which may well be contained in this short sentence of the  
*Psalmist*.

*blessed estate in this life.*

5

*Psalmist. Psal. 37. 4. De-*  
*light thy selfe in the Lord,*  
*and he will giue thee thy*  
*hearts desire:* which I doubt  
not but all true Christians  
(when they haue well con-  
sidered it) would be glad  
to attaine vnto: But either  
through ignorance of the  
way how to attaine it; or  
through negligence; not  
putting in practise what  
they know: they spend  
many yeares, either secure-  
ly, or vncomfortably, sel-  
dome attaining to that hea-  
uenly feasting, which (if  
they were wise) might be  
their daily refreshing:  
whose estate I much ten-  
dring, doe endeavour to  
shew them, how this hap-  
pie life may be attained;  
which

Desired by  
many, not  
attained.

How this  
life is at-  
tained.



Ioh. 1. 16.

Ioh. 6. 27.

35.

34.

which I cōceiue to be onely by a more plentifull feeding vpon Christ by faith. It is without question, that all and euery part of our spirituall life is in Christ, *of whose fulnesse wee receiue grace for grace*: and this is as cleare, that we receiue no grace first or last from Christ, but by beleeving: in which respect Christ is truely and principally sayd to be our spirituall food, and beleeving to be the true feeding vpon him. Which being so, it necessarily followes, that feeding seldome or weakely, we cannot haue much spirituall strength: and otherwise feeding plentifully and soundly, wee shall be fat, and flourishing in

*blessed estate in this life.*

7

in grace, and so attaine vn-  
to the blessed life spoken  
of.

For the better vnderstan-  
ding and practising where-  
of, this is specially to be  
considered, How every true  
beleever may daily, yea, oft  
in the day, by faith feed  
vpon Christ, that so he may  
receiue from him all spiri-  
tuall nourishment, for his  
refreshing and strengthen-  
ing to every good worke.

How to feed  
oft in the  
day on  
Christ.

This is done by setting  
before vs those sweet pro-  
mises, which G O D hath  
made to vs, for the streng-  
thening of our faith in all  
our necessities: and, so par-  
ticularly to apply them to  
our selues. Whereby we  
may comfortably assure our  
selues

selues that we shall enioy that which God hath promised. Wherein wee are first to get the true meaning of that which is promised.

Secondly, To see we haue a good warrant, that this is promised to vs, that therevpon we may conclude, we shall certainly enioy that which God hath promised, seeing he is faithfull who hath promised.

Example.

But seeing this is not well conceived by many, I will make it plaine by example. I Cor. 1. 30. it is sayd; *But of him are yee in Christ Iesus, who of God is made vnto vs wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.* In which is



*blessed estate in this life.*

9

as much sayd as may be  
conceiued, or desired; the  
meaning whereof is, that  
every true beleeuer, is by  
Gods spirit made a living  
member of Christ Iesus,  
from and in whom, he is  
made by God a true par-  
taker of all things needfull  
to salvation: that whereas  
he is by nature foolish, guilt-  
ie, filthy, and in bondage,  
now in Christ he is made  
perfectly wise, righteous,  
holy, freed from all his  
enemies, and so restored to  
full happineſſe. This pro-  
mise of God being cleare-  
ly vnderstood, must now  
be applyed particularly by  
every beleeuer to himſelfe,  
thus: Seeing GOD who  
is all-sufficient and faith-  
full,

full, hath in his WORD, which is Truth it selfe, promised these great benefites (in which all are contained) to every true beleever, therefore I who doe truely, though weakely, beleeue in Christ, may bold assure my selfe, that all these bee mine, and therefore I shall not want any thing needfull for my present comfort, or eternall happineffe. Which whosoever doth daily practise in this manner to maintaine, and increase his faith by application of this, and all other of GODS promises, he shall daily more and more enioy in this life that blessed estate we speake of.

But

*blest estate in this life.*

II

But for as much as faith  
the gift of God, and we  
cannot further beleue then  
we be drawne by Gods  
spirit, therefore wee must  
prayer often and fervent  
prayer, that God by this  
means would increase our  
faith.

Pray for  
faith.

This may seeme easie to  
be performed, but vpon  
a tryall, it will not be  
found so easie to doe it  
actually; for besides our  
great vntowardnesse  
to beleue, I cannot thinke  
any dutie, wherein our  
common Adversary, will  
be more cunning and di-  
uine to hinder vs, then  
in this: either by keeping  
vs from the worke, or be-  
leuing vs in it: whereby

Not easie.

But B 2 it



Two chiefe  
lettres.

1. Not pri-  
zing Christ.

2. Our vn-  
worthinesse.

it comes to passe, that ve-  
ry few doe (to any good  
purpose) practise the same.

Amongst many lettres  
which hinder the faithfull  
practise hercof, I obserue  
these two, in two diuers  
sortes of beleeuers. The  
former in those, who not  
sufficiently feeling their  
wants, and too much con-  
tented with their estate,  
doe not so prize Christ  
and this blessed estate in  
him, as may moue them  
to take this paines, and  
therefore neuer reach vn-  
to this growth in grace  
wherevnto they might  
come, if the fault were  
not in themselves. The  
other let is in those who  
highly prizing the benefi-  
t

and earnestly labouring for it, are by the sense of their owne vnworthinesse, so kept downe, that they cannot with any hope looke vp, for so great a blessing.

For the remoouing of both these lettes, the first sort are to bethinke themselves, what an vncomfortable account it will be, when G O D shall call them to it, to see how many ycares they haue spent, with little growth in grace, either to the glory of God, or good example to others, or to the peace of their owne foules. Whereas on the other side, they might haue attained vnto such a sweet life, as would haue

Remoue of  
the first let.

beene a heauen vpon earth;  
namely, *To reioyce alwayes in  
the Lord.*

Of the se-  
cond let.

Mat. 11. 28.

For the other poore  
soules, who are kept downe  
with the sense of their owne  
vnworthinesse, they are to  
know, that all Gods pro-  
mises, are free and vnde-  
served; so as no vnworthi-  
nesse ought to hinder them  
from beleeving: yea, ra-  
ther they that haue the  
most sense of their owne  
vnworthinesse, haue most  
incouragement to beleue,  
for that voyce of Christ,  
*Come vnto me all you that  
are weary and heauie laden,  
and I will ease you,* serues  
not onely for our first con-  
version, but in all our di-  
resses whatsoever, through-  
out



out the whole course of our life.

If any escape both these lettes, and goe about this worke, then will Satan vse all his skill to beguile both sortes : such as are weake and heauie hearted, soone discouraged, he tempts and perswades, they labour in vaine, and doe not beleeue, when indeed they doe, as shall appeare. The other sort who are too well conceited, and light hearted, Satan labours to perswade, that they haue more faith then indeed they haue, and that their case is better then in truth it is.

It shall be therefore the wisdom of all who will

B. 4

not

Satan will  
beguile;

Some that  
they be-  
leeue not;

Others, that  
they haue  
more faith  
then they  
haue.

not bee deceived, carefully to examine and try themselves; which that they may the better doe, let them consider of these marks that follow: whereby either sort may certainly iudge of themselves.

Four  
marks of  
faith not  
seene.

For such, as conscionably endeavour to nourish their faith in such manner as hath beene shewed, and yet find no comfort, but feare they doe not beleue, (when as indeed they doe) these are to discern their faith by such secret operations, as doe certainly shew faith to be there, though it be not seene: namely,  
An vnfeigned grieve for the want of faith, with an vn-  
cessant

1. Grieve for  
want of  
faith.

ceſſant indeavour for the  
attaining of it. Againe,  
A reverent eſteeme of God,  
and hearty affection of vn-  
feigned loue to him, which  
cannot be without ſome  
former apprehenſion of  
G'o d's loue to them,  
which is in many, (though  
they ſee it not). And laſt-  
ly, A tender Conſcience,  
fearing to diſpleaſe God,  
even in ſmaller matters,  
which others little regard.  
Whoſoever ſhall find theſe  
fruits, (which cannot come  
but from faith) may cer-  
tainly know that there is  
a roote of faith grounded  
in their hearts, though  
they ſee it not. But ſuch  
as haue no feeling of their  
faith, and ſee no ſuch ef-

2. Conſtant  
labour for  
it.

3. True  
loue to  
God.

4. A tender  
conſcience.

No fruits,  
no faith.



Notes of  
true and  
false com-  
fort.

fects in their liues, haue iust cause to thinke that they haue no Faith at all.

As for the other sort, who are too well perswaded of themselves, that they find comfort in meditating on Gods promises, whereas indeed they deceiue themselves, and haue not that faith they imagine, as their fruits doe shew.

This may be discerned by these notes;

1. True, is  
hardly got.

First, True comfort is usually very hardly gotten, with much prayer and labour; and it is oft a long time before this bee felt: therefore they who vpon their first thoughts on these  
pro-

promises, finde comfort that they haue part in them, may so farre missest, all is not sound, till they shall see some better prooffe thereof: which if they doe not, but for all this will be confident, that all is well, it is to bee feared, their comfort is not sound

For this is another propertie of that true comfort which springs from faith, especially in young and weake beleeuers, that they (so highly valewing the benefit) are very fearefull of being deceived, and must see good evidence before they will be perswaded, that they haue this saving faith.

2. Feare of deceit.

Whereof

3. Poore  
in spirit,  
mourne,  
and lowly.

Whereof if they shall be perswaded, yet therewithall is ioyned such a feeling of the weakenesse of their faith, and so of all grace, as makes them poore in their owne eyes, and mourne for their wants, thinking lowly of themselves, and more highly reverencing the graces of God in others. Whereas they who be deceived, are as the **LAODICEANS**, rich and wanting nothing, and so be merry, and too light hearted, thinking too well of themselves, and too slenderly of others, better then themselves.

4. Hunger  
and labour  
for more.

Another sure marke of sensible faith and comfort, is this; That they that haue tasted



tasted of it, can never be satisfied, but still hunger and labour for more : none more diligently vse all good meanes to grow in grace then they : Even as the strong and most healthfull bodie, doth feed better then the weake and sickly. But such as being well satisfied with that they haue, and feele no hunger, nor labour for more, it is evident their faith and comfort are not good.

To proceed, and not to gather all that might be added hereto, this shall serue for all ; That as like fire, like heate : so like faith, like life, great or small. So that where there is strong faith, there must needs be great obedience,

5. Answerable obedience.

ence, and therefore whosoever he be that is carelesse of his conuersation, and barren in the fruits of a holy life, his faith must needs be weake, if not dead.

Wherefore to conclude, I advise every one, who by these marks shall discern himselfe to be deceived, with fancie in stead of faith; to goe about this worke more seriously, and to lay a better foundation of faith, and not to say, he hath found comfort, till he can bring good witnesse thereof. Which whosoever shall neglect, shall in the end, (to say no more) lament his folly, when he who seeing his error, shall more carefully and constantly put in practice

*blessed estate in this life.*

23

rise this maine dutie of dai-  
ly feeding vpon *Christ*, shall  
grow in grace, and attaine  
to that blessed life here,  
whercof we speake, be-  
sides eternall life, the  
full reward of all  
his labours.

(. . .)

*F I N I S.*





Fund

Plain

Collation

A-Q<sup>12</sup>R<sup>6</sup>(R<sub>5-6</sub> blank)R-X<sup>12</sup>

Y<sup>10</sup>(Y<sub>10</sub> [blank?]wanting)

A<sup>6</sup>(A<sub>1</sub> [blank?] wanting)

B<sup>8</sup>

C<sub>11</sub> wanting

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